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ABSTRACT

This book describes the "Returning the Gift" project, designed to create new opportunities for North American Native writers to share their work with Native youth, the overall Native community, and the general public. The project included a festival that brought together over 200 current and emerging Native American writers (Norman, Oklahoma, July 8-11, 1992); creation of several organizations; publication of a directory of North American Native writers; and outreach writing workshops in schools. "The Eighth Generation: Native Writing in the 21st Century" (Joseph Bruchac III) introduces the book, and "Celebrating the Vision" (Lee Francis) provides personal observations of the writers festival. Edited excerpts of talks given at the festival's four plenary sessions summarize each speaker's message on major themes. The session titles, themes, and speakers were: (1) "Writing for Our Children, Writing for Ourselves"--Native writing and Native identity (Leslie Marmon Silko), storytelling (A. C. Ross, Vi Hilbert), poetry writing (Eleanor Sioui), writing in Native languages (Ofelia Zepeda, Harold Littlebird); (2) "Emerging Native Images"--weaving together our community voice (Beth Brant), Natives in the media (Alex Jacobs/Karoniaktatie), Native writing and autobiography (Nora Dauenhauer, Robert L. Perea, A. C. Ross), teaching Native literature (Carroll Arnett/Gogisgi, Carter Revard, Denise Sweet); (3) "Entering the Canons"--our place in world literature (Lance Henson, Kelly Morgan, Daniel David Moses, Jeannette C. Armstrong); and (4) "Earth and the Circle of Life"--Native writers and the environment (Eleanor Sioui, Linda Hogan, Barney Bush, Elizabeth Woody, Lincoln Tritt). "Combining Voice with Vision" (James Bruchac) describes the writing workshops held in schools throughout Indian country. Eight lesson plans from the workshops include grade level, names of texts, discussion themes and questions, and writing exercises. The plans were developed by Rudy Martin, Lance Henson, Joseph Bruchac III, M.

Cochise Anderson, Roberta Hill Whiteman, and Jeanetta L. Calhoun. "The Wordcraft Circle Vision" (Lee Francis) describes a project that links writing mentors and apprentices. Mentors provide practical tips in "Practical Advice When Writing Poetry" (Cheryl Savageau); "Letter to an Apprentice Poet" (Charles Brashear); "Advice to a Wannabe Professional Writer" (D. L. Birchfield); "The Art of Traditional Storytelling" (Gayle Ross); "The Art of Contemporary Storytelling" (Sherman Alexie); and "The Performing Poet As an 'Almost Storyteller'" (Carol Lee Sanchez). An anthology presents poems and short stories by student participants in the festival, workshops, and mentoring circles. Also includes contributor profiles and pieces by project mentors. (SV)

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